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REPORT

CD NO.

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY	USSR - Estonian SSR	DATE OF INFORMATION	1950
SUBJECT	Economic - Shale mining	DATE DIST.	13 Feb 1951
HOW PUBLISHED	Daily newspaper		
WHERE PUBLISHED	Tallin	NO. OF PAGES	2
DATE PUBLISHED	21 Dec 1950	SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.	
LANGUAGE	Russian		

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Sovetskaya Estoniya.

ESTONIAN SHALE MINE SUCCESSFULLY ADOPTS COAL-MINING METHODS

Before 1947, shale mining in the Kukruse Mine, the oldest shale mine in the Estonian SSR, was carried on by the room and pillar system and shale was extracted in small rooms. The workmen themselves had to run the mine car into the room, load it manually, and then remove the car manually to the main haulage drift. The large number of rooms made the organization of work and the effort to increase labor productivity difficult.

The length of the mine face was in all only 20 meters. As a result, the face advanced rapidly and the conveyer had to be transferred frequently. It was extremely difficult to set up the conveyer in the small space; in addition, roads had to be remade constantly.

Engineers and technicians of the Kukruse Mine decided to profit by the experience of the country's outstanding coal mines, and in 1947 four mechanized 50-meter-long mine faces were cut and equipped with GTK-3 cutting machines and conveyers. The use of the cutting machine was soon mastered and by the end of 1947 the average monthly output was 107.2 percent and labor productivity 108 percent of the norm. In 1947, 10.9 percent of the shale output was accounted for by the mechanized mine faces.

However, the advantages of mechanization were not at first fully realized. The use of the cutting machine made the mine face advance very rapidly and this in turn necessitated a great increase in development work. To cut this down, the mine faces were lengthened to 80 meters, and in 1948 two additional 80-meter faces were put into operation.

Shale is harder than coal and the cutting bits of the light cutting machine wore out quickly. At the request of the Mine Administration, new USSR-made KMP-1 machines were introduced in the Kukruse Mine. In 1948, the monthly output per machine exceeded the plan 13.3 percent.

Mechanization of the mine faces sharply increased labor productivity so that every worker at the mine face produced 36 percent more shale than his planned quota. In 1948, mechanized mine faces accounted for 18.4 percent of the shale output.

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In 1949 the average monthly output of the cutting machine exceeded the 1948 output 12 percent as a result of further extending the mine face to 100 meters. The Kukruse Mine fulfilled the 1949 year plan by 31 October and the Five-Year Plan by the 32d anniversary of 7 November.

The mechanized mines are now delivering 60-70 percent of the entire shale output. The room and pillar system has finally been relegated to the past. In the third quarter of 1950, the Kukruse Mine won second place among USSR mines in the All-Union Socialist Competition.

It had been formerly believed in Estonia that cutting machines lowered the quality of the shale mined, but the experience of the Kukruse Mine proves to the contrary that it actually improves the quality of the output. Cutting machines have led to a considerable increase in the production of first-class shale in comparison with former years.

Mechanization of mining operations has resulted in a great decrease in the production cost of shale. This was 10 percent lower in the third quarter of 1950 than in 1948 and was considerably less than the average for mines of the Ministry of Local and Shale Chemical Industry.

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